

## **Historic, archived document**

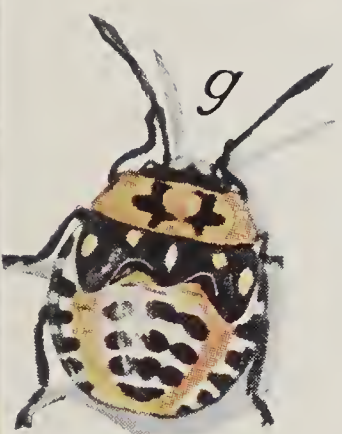
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# HARLEQUIN BUG



MARY F. BENSON

*a*, Adult; *b*, eggs; *c* to *g*, young, or nymphs; *h*, damaged cabbage leaf with nymphs, adult bug, and eggs. (*a* and *c* to *g* about 3 times natural size; *b* about 4 times natural size, *h* about natural size.)

(See other side for life history and control)



## **HARLEQUIN BUG**

(*Murgantia histrionica* Hahn)

The harlequin bug, also known as the fire bug, the collard bug, and the calico bug, is a pest of vegetable gardens in the South. Its favorite food plants are cole crops such as broccoli, cabbage, turnip, horseradish, and kale.

Early in the spring the bugs come out of their winter quarters and invade fields planted to these crops. They lay eggs on the under side of the leaves. The eggs hatch from 4 to 15 days later, and the young, or nymphs, feed by sucking the sap from the leaves and stems. White yellowish blotches soon appear where the insect feeds. When the insect is abundant, the plants may wither and die in a short time. The bugs become full-grown from 6 to 8 weeks after hatching, depending on the temperature. Another brood may start 2 or 3 weeks after the first one matures.

### **Control Measures**

Practice clean cultural methods throughout the season. Disk and plow under all stalks and other refuse as soon as the crop has been harvested.

Against the adult or nearly mature bug, control by insecticides is not wholly effective. However, dusts or sprays containing sabadilla, rotenone, or pyrethrum will control the insect in the younger stages.

For dusting, use a dust containing 10 to 20 percent of sabadilla-seed powder, 1 percent of rotenone, or 0.3 percent of pyrethrins. Apply at the rate of about 30 pounds per acre, or 1 to 2 ounces to 50 feet of row.

Begin dusting or spraying as soon as the bugs appear and repeat weekly if necessary.

Hand picking the adult bugs when they first appear in the garden area will oftentimes keep the pests in check. Dropping the bugs as they are picked from the plant in a container that has been partially filled with soap and water is a convenient way of destroying them.

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